SERMON

Preached *March* 6. 1675.

In the Cathedral Church of S. *Peter* in

YORK;

Before the Right Honourable

Sr. *TIMOTHY LITTLETON*, Kt.

AND

VERE BERTIE, Esquire,

His Majesties Judges of ASSIZE

for the *Northern Circuit*.

By *William Stainforth*, M. A. Rector of St. *Mary Bishop-hill* the Elder in the CITY of *YORK*.

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A

SERMON

Sir [illegible] Preached March 6. 1695.

In the Cathedral Church of S. Peter in

YORK:

[illegible]

Sir TIMOTHY LITTLETON, K

AND

ZERF DERTIE, Esquire,

His Majesties Judges of ASSIZE

[illegible]

By William Bainforth, M. A. Rector

[illegible]

OTTAWA

LONDON,

[illegible]

To the Right Worshipful

Sir *EDMUND JENNINGS*,

High Sheriff of the County of *YORK*.

SIR,

I *T was by your Command that this* SERMON *was first Preached, and now Printed; and I have very good grounds to hope, that so urgent a Reason of its Publication will secure me against the censure and imputation of Vain-glory, and also recommend the Discourse, and entitle it to a fairer Acceptance; for it is no inconsiderable advantage to have the Approbation of so discerning, and yet so unbiassed a Judgement, as you are known to excel in. And as nothing but this con-*

consideration could have tempted me to expose any thing of mine to so publick a View; so seeing this is exposed, I humbly beg that you would continue to it the Honour and Aid of your Protection: and that you would be pleas'd to accept of it as a sincere, though small, acknowledgement of those undeserved favours, which you have bestowed upon,

SIR,

Your most humble
and most obedient Servant,

Will. Stainforth.

A

SERMON

Preached before the Right Honourable

Sir *Timothy Littleton*, Knight; *and Vere Bertie*, Esquire, His Majesties Judges of *Assize* for the *Northern Circuit.*

Prov. XXI. 3.

To do Justice and Judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

AS the *Jews* were a carnal and fleshly People, so were they chiefly intent on, and mindful of those Duties, that were most consistent with their earthly Lusts and Inclinations; and because God had separated them from the rest of the World, and taken them into his immediate Care and Govern-

Government, and had given them particular Laws and Rules for the celebration of his publick Worship, they fondly imagin'd, that God would be indulgent to them, in an extraordinary manner; and that if they did but rigorously observe the outward Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, they should by that means attone for all their other Guilts, and render God propitious and favourable to them. And this conceit took such deep Roots in their hearts, and prevail'd so generally amongst them, that though never any people was more regardless of the essential and fundamental Duties of Religion, nor less concern'd for inward Purity and Holiness of mind, yet never was any more strictly observant of the external and formal parts of Devotion. Thus they would fast often, and pray much, and think no sacrifices too chargeable or expensive for them; and yet at the same time they would gripe and oppress their Neighbours, offer all kinds of injustice and fraud to one another, cherish in their hearts evil Lusts and foul desires, and offend God by plain, open, and direct Immoralities. This God often complains of by his Prophets,

phets, and tells them, that for this reason he abhorr'd and detested all their religious Formalities and costly Sacrifices; and if they would not reform and repent, he would withdraw his favour and protection from them, and pour down the fiercest instances of his Wrath and Indignation upon them: for that which he delighted most in, was the Purity and Holiness of their minds, and the observance of such Duties, as tended most to the interest and preservation of Societies, and the mutual benefits and advantages of one another. And for this very Reason *Solomon* tells them, *To do Justice and Judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice.*

The Text is one entire Sentence or Proposition, and hath within it self a compleat sense (as the rest of the Proverbs of this Book for the most part have) without either any necessary dependence upon any thing going before, or reference to any thing coming after. And the words are plain, obvious, and accommodated to the most ordinary understandings. So that as I need not spend any time in searching into the Contexture of the

words, so neither in examining the explication of several Commentators and Expositors upon them. And therefore I shall onely further endeavour to confirm the Proposition deduced from the Text,

1. *From other places of Holy Scripture.*
2. *From the different nature of these two Duties.*
3. *From the different ends of them.*
4. *From the different effects of them.*

1. *From other places of Holy Scripture,* wherein we find God rejecting and abhorring their Sacrifices, if they were not accompanied with a real Repentance, and inward sincerity of mind, and the outward works of Mercy and Justice. For though God did solemnly enjoyn the *Jewes* the use of Sacrifices, adopted them by his express Command into their Religion and publick Worship, and gave them particular Rules and Canons for their performance and observation; yet he was so far from intending that they should be either their only Righteousness, or the principal part of it, that he never accepted of

of them, when they were not in conjunction with other Duties. And for this reason, the *Sacrifices of the wicked* are said to be an *abomination to the Lord*, especially when he brings it with a wicked mind, *Prov.* 21. 27. and such are all the sacrifices of unjust and unrighteous men, who have no regard to the known Laws of Equity, and make no difference betwixt what is profitable, and what is just; but having rooted out of their minds all sense of moral Honesty, make use of all the Arts of Cunning, and the force of Power to defraud and oppress, to undermine and lay hold on the Rights and Properties of others. And accordingly *Micah* 6. 6, 7. we have the Prophet putting this Question, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the most High? shall I come before him with burnt Offerings, with Calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, and with ten thousand Rivers of Oyl? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my Body for the sin of my Soul?* The Answer to all this is in the Verse following, *viz. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require*

of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God? From whence it is plain, that though God had commanded sacrifices as the principal part of his external Worship, yet he had all along the chiefest regard to the Duties of Justice, Mercy and Humility. These were the most especial Objects of his Delight and Pleasure; and without the Union and Combination of these Vertues Sacrifice was an Abomination to him. Sacrifice without Justice was as ungrateful as Robbery; Sacrifice without Mercy, as provoking as Murder; and Sacrifice without Humility, as affronting as Hypocrisie. The wickedness of the man shed a guilt into the Offering; and a Sacrifice of Atonement, when it was brought by an unjust hand, was so odious and offensive to God, that it stood in need of another for its expiation. And therefore God speaks to all unjust and unrighteous men, *To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices? Bring no more vain Oblations to me; Incense is an Abomination to me*, Isa. I. 11. From all which places, and several others which I forbear to mention, it is evident, that God rejected Sacrifices, though

though they were Duties of his own appointment, though they were eſtabliſhed parts of his publick worſhip, if they were not accompanied with Juſtice and other moral Duties, and conſequently that to do Juſtice is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice.

II. To do Juſtice and Judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice is evident *from the different Nature of theſe two Duties*, and the different Grounds, from whence ariſeth our Obligation to them. For Sacrifice was grounded upon a poſitive Precept and Inſtitution: It had its riſe from the meer will and good pleaſure of God Almighty; ſo that if Mankind had not received ſome expreſs Revelation concerning the neceſſity of this Duty, in all likelihood they would never of themſelves have found out any reaſon for its Obſervation: But Juſtice has its foundation in the Nature of God; and if God had never delivered to Mankind any promulgate Law concerning Juſtice, yet the very natural Notion we have of God and his Eſſential Juſtice would have ſufficiently inſtructed us in our indiſpenſable Obligations to its practice:

and

and both these I shall endeavour to make appear.

1. Sacrifices were grounded upon a positive Precept, and the Reason of their Obligation was deriv'd from the Express and Revealed Will of God. It's true indeed, that all Nations that have had any sense of God, and own'd his Being by any publick Worship and solemn Acknowledgement, have made use of Sacrifices for this very end and purpose; and from this universal consent in practice some have inferr'd Sacrifices to be a Natural Duty, and that it was founded in some common principle in Reason. So *Paulus Burgensis*: *In qualibet ætate, & apud quaslibet hominum Nationes, semper fuit aliqua Sacrificiorum Oblatio; Quod autem est apud omnes, naturale est.* In all Ages (saith he) and among all Nations, there was always some kind of Sacrifices. Now that which was so universal, must of necessity spring from some common principle in Nature. Thus far indeed I confess sacrificing Natural, as it was a solemn and sensible Rite of Worship, because Nature which teacheth

teacheth us to worship God in publick, doth also instruct us to express this publick Worship by some external Rites and sensible Instances: But that Nature doth so point out and determine the kind, as to teach us to do this by Sacrifices, which consists in the destruction of living and the consumption of useful things, none I presume will ever be able to make out any tolerable proof or evidence to confirm it. For to use the words of a late Learned Prelate, in his excellent Discourse concerning Natural Religion: *When it is well consider'd* (saith he) *what little ground there is to perswade a man, left to his own free Reason, that God should be pleased with the killing and burning of Beasts, or with the destroying of such things by fire, of which better use might be made, if they were dispos'd of some other way; I say when it is well considered what little reason there is to induce such a man to believe, that the killing or burning of Beasts or Birds, or any other thing useful to mankind, should of it self be a proper and natural means to testifie our subjection to God, or to be used by way of expiation from sin; it will rather appear probable, that the original of this*

practice

practice was from Institution, and that our first Parents were by particular Revelation instructed in this way of Worship, from whom it was deliver'd down to their successive Generations by verbal Tradition; and by this means was continu'd in those Families who departed from the Church, and proved Heathen in the first Ages of the World; amongst whom this Tradition was in course of time, for want of care and frequent renewals, corrupted with many humane superinducements, according to the genius *or interests of several Times or Nations.*

And indeed if we consult meerly natural Light, we shall discover no necessary Foundations in that for Sacrifices; for that does not at all teach us, that the slaying of living Creatures, or the consumption of any useful thing by Fire should be any way pleasing or grateful to God; or that he should accept of it as an acknowledgement of our dependence and subjection, or as a satisfaction for sin and disobedience. For what are Blood & Smoak to the God of Spirits? or what compensation can the slaying of my Beasts make to Divine Justice for not mortifying my lusts? Can the Blood of a Bull, which is a corporeal

poreal thing, cleanſe the guilt of my Soul, which is a moral defect? Or does the Immortal God ſtand in need of Meat and Drink? Some of the Heathens indeed fancied, that their Gods were delighted and refreſhed with the ſteams and vapours, that aſcended from the Sacrifices; and therefore they uſed to call their Sacrifices, τὴ θεοῦ τροφὴν, the Food of God; but the reaſon of this miſtake, might be, as I humbly conceive, either Firſt, the malice and cunning of the Devil, who becauſe he could not wholly root out of mens minds the belief of a God, did therefore endeavour to adulterate the true Notion of Him; that ſo men having their Souls poſſeſs'd with falſe conceptions and repreſentations of the Deity, they might the more eaſily miſtake both the right manner and the true Object of their Worſhip; and by that means be more readily drawn to give and appropriate it to the Devil. Or Secondly, men finding that Sacrifice had been the conſtant and general way of Worſhipping God; and underſtanding neither the Original nor the true Reaſon of its Pra-

ctice; they might fondly imagine (since they knew no better) their Lusts having darkened their understandings) that God might some way or other be pleased and recreated with the Fumes that rise from the Altar. But this was a ridiculous mistake and folly, altogether repugnant to the perfections of the Divine Nature, and the Sentiments of sober Reason, and is sufficient to convince us, that Sacrifice was a Duty not directed by the light of Nature, but that it must be deriv'd from some Positive Precept and Institution.

But now Justice is a Vertue, that has its foundation in the Nature of God: For as the Notion of God does include in it all possible and conceivable perfection, so from thence do we discern Justice to be one of his most Essential Attributes. For it would be unreasonable to imagine, that he who is immutably good and perfect, could fall under any Temptation of doing any thing, that would not suit with the strictest Rules of Justice and Equity. And therefore the Hea-

Heathens, who had no knowledge of God, but what was conveyed unto them by the Light of natural Reason, reckoned Justice amongst the fundamental Properties of the Divine Nature; and *Plato* affirmed, Θεὸς οὐδαμῇ οὐδαμῶς ἄδικος, ἀλλ' ὡς οἷόν τε δικαιότατος, *That cannot be said in any kind or respect whatsoever to be unjust, but so far as is possible to be most just.* And that this was the general belief amongst them may appear by that universal Custom of Attesting God by solemn Oaths, whereby amongst other of his Attributes, they particularly own'd that of his Justice, and that he would certainly avenge all fraud and unrighteousness. And what was thus dictated by the Light of Nature, is fully confirmed unto us by Gods Revelations in his own Word; wherein he has made such ample discoveries of his own Nature, and of his Dealings with men, that we must needs conclude, that Justice is one of the moral perfections of the Divine Nature, and that God may as soon cease to be, as fail to be just. *Shall not the Judge of all the world do right?* sayes *Abraham.* Which Question Gen. 16. 25.

is an emphatical Affirmation that he will do ſo. And the Apoſtle St. *Paul* rejecteth all ſuſpicions to the contrary, with an *Abſit*.

Rom. 9. 14. *What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid!* And for this Reaſon Princes and Governours, Magiſtrates and Judges, who are Gods Vicegerents and Repreſentatives, and to whom he has intruſted the care and government of the People

Pſal. 82. 6. committed to their charge, are ſaid to be *Gods*. And Gods they are not ſo much in reſpect of the ſacredneſs of their Character, and greatneſs of their Power, as in the due exerciſe of their Authority and regular Adminiſtration of Juſtice. For when conſcience is their Councellor, and the Law their Rule, and the publick Good their End; when they defend the Innocent and puniſh the Criminal, and diſtribute Juſtice without the mixtures of Paſsion, and the corruptions of Partiality, then do they ſhine with Divinity indeed, and they reſemble God not only in the participations of his Greatneſs, but alſo in the likeneſs of his Integrity, which adorns their Office, and

juſtifies

juſtifies their Titles more than all their Furrs and Robes and Enſigns of Honour. Zeale for Juſtice and orderly execution of it, is that which Deifies Magiſtrates, exalts their Stations, raiſeth them above the common level of Mankind, ſets a glory and a luſtre upon their perſons, makes them fit Objects of our Homage and Reverence; and we may juſtly affirm of ſuch, that *Gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.*

But then on the other ſide, when Magiſtrates imploy their Power to ends contrary to thoſe for which it was given them, and make uſe of Gods Authority in a way repugnant to his Will (*i. e.*) when they neglect the Works of Mercy and Juſtice, they are no more Gods but Idols, nay, the worſt ſort of Idols, which being made to repreſent, do yet foully reproach the divine Power. Idols did I ſay? perhaps you'll think them worſe, when I tell you, that the Devil is ſaid Ἀνιστόρειν τὴν τάξιν τῶν πραγμάτων, to *invert the Order of things*, to change their natural reſpects and Relations, to diſgrace Vertue and coun-

countenance Vice, to put shame upon Integrity and security upon Sin, to punish the Innocent and favour the Guilty. And then whom such Magistrates are like, that are seduc'd by his Temptations, and corrupted by his Example, you'll find no great difficulty in making a conjecture; for it is impossible they should any way resemble God, because Justice is essential to his Nature, and can no more be separated from him, than he can be divided from himself.

And must it not hence follow, that Justice which is so essential to Gods Nature, must be more acceptable to him than Sacrifice which depended meerly upon his Will? Is not God best pleas'd with himself, having all possible and conceivable Perfections and Excellencies within himself? And must not he then in an especial manner be delighted with those Duties, that are most like and agreeable to himself? that bear the Impress of his own Nature, the Character and Signature of his own Being? and is not Justice of this sort? does it not make us like God, and

and partakers of the Divine Nature? and doe not Magistrates, who rule by his Authority, acquire by it a more exalted kind of Divinity, become Gods to the Publick Weale, and subordinate Saviours to the whole Kingdom? And this is sufficient to prove, that *to do Justice and Judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice.*

III. To do Justice and Judgement is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice is evident *from the different ends of these two Duties.* For Sacrifice was not enjoyn'd for its own sake; but Justice always was, and is, and ever will be.

First, Sacrifice was not enjoyn'd for its own sake; For,

1. Sacrifices were ordained to be Types of the Sacrifice of Christ, who was to be offered up in the Fulness of Time upon the Cross; they were instituted to be Figures and Shadows (silent Prophesies) of the death of the *Messiah*; and the vertue they had of expiating legal Guilt, was a suitable Type

of

of the infinite efficacy and meritoriousness of the Blood of the Son of God, which was a sufficient Expiation of the Moral and Eternal Guilt of the Sins of all Mankind. This is clear from several places of the New Testament, and more especially from St. *Paul's* Epistle to the *Hebrews*.

2. Sacrifices were enjoyned to be as a Guard and Security for other Duties, to be as a Hedge and a Fence for the Moral Precepts, and especially to defend the *Jewes* against Idolatry: for the *Jewes* were an extreamly vain and carnal people, and very prone to be in love with, and to follow the superstitions and idolatrous practices of the *Gentiles*; and therefore rather than God would suffer them to be enticed, and drawn away with the Vanities of the Heathens, he gratifies their childish humour by instituting a pompous way of Worship that was agreeable to their Infant-State and present weakness, and commands them to offer Sacrifice to himself the true God, lest otherwise through the example of the *Gentiles* they

they ſhould have been tempted to have done it to Idols. And accordingly *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith particularly of the Sacrifices, *That the end of them was to keep the Jewes from Idolatry*: and this alſo *Trypho* acknowledgeth, though he was a *Jew*, and one that vigorouſly aſſerted the Law, and mightily gloried in it. And *Tertullian* is of the ſame opinion concerning the end of their Inſtitution, for he ſaith, *Populum pronum Idololatriæ ejuſmodi officiis Religioni ſuæ voluit aſtringere.* *Adv. Martion. l. 2.*

And this ſhews that Sacrifices were not commanded for themſelves, and that the goodneſs of this Duty was not Natural and Intrinſecal, but Relative and External, and depended meerly upon the ſucceſs that it had in promoting Duties of a higher Nature, and eſpecially in ſecuring the *Jewes* againſt Idolatry.

But now Juſtice always was, and is, and ever will be enjoined for its own ſake: It has a natural Goodneſs and Beauty in it, which

at all Times, and in all Ages recommends it to the practice of Mankind. Justice is one of those Duties, that is to be beloved αὐθ' αὑτὴν (as *Aristotle* speaks) *for its own self*: It does not stand in need of any borrowed lustre to make us enamoured with it; but its own proper goodness and intrinsique worth sufficiently bespeaks our Obligations to it, and shews that we cannot be unjust without ceasing in some degree to be men: For Justice is a Duty that ariseth from the Moral frame and constitution of our Souls, and we must offer violence to our selves, if we be not just to others. He that does to another, what he would not have done to himself, affronts the Principles of his own Nature, and unsettles his own Peace by doing wrong to his Neighbour: for Conscience will recoile, when it finds its indisputable Maxime contradicted by a contrary practice; and a man creates a mighty uneasiness and disorder in his own mind, when he suffers the Flesh to resist the inbred Laws of his Spirit, and the Obligations to Justice to be run down by the Temptations of Revenge or Malice, Partiality

tiality or Paſsion, Covetouſneſs or Cowardiſe. Nay, by this means a man does not only diſturb the peace and tranquillity of his own mind, but he does more or leſs unhinge the publick Quiet: for the ſecurity of Government, with the intereſt of all its members, doth ſo much depend upon the practice and diſtribution of Juſtice, that all contrary Acts do naturally tend to its diſſolution. For wherein lies the difference betwixt a ſtate of abſolute Liberty, and a ſtate of Government? but that in the one men live according to their boundleſs Luſts and Paſsions, but in the other they are directed by Laws, and reſtrain'd by Penalties: In the one unbridled Will and Appetite is the Principle by which they Act; in the other equitable Laws and prudent Inſtitutions are the Meaſures and Rules of their converſations: The one is a ſtate of Violence and Fraud, becauſe all things are expos'd to an Arbitrary Force and Power; the other a ſtate of Peace and Settlement, becauſe mens Rights are fixed and Properties determin'd and ſecur'd againſt all unjuſt attempts and invaſions. So

that Injuſtice, which introduceth a licentiouſneſs and wildneſs of living, weakens the Pillars and ſaps the Foundations of Government; and becauſe it contradicts the ends of Civil Society, and hinders all the bleſſed effects of it, men thereby become enemies to one another, exert all the hoſtilities of corrupt Nature and enraged Paſſions, and ingage in a ſtate of War either to defend or retrieve their Rights.

And all this happens moſt certainly, when Magiſtrates and Judges, who by their Offices are deſigned to be Miniſters of publick Juſtice, become violaters of it; for though private injuſtice does but weaken the Sinews of Government, yet publick Injuſtice does wholly unbind them; though private injuſtice is but as the removing a Pin out of a Building, yet publick injuſtice is as the ſubverſion of the Foundation it ſelf. And as that mans caſe is deſperate, and his recovery (without a miracle) impoſsible, whoſe Diſeaſe is grown to that height, that it maſters all its Remedies, and converts the very

very Medicine into its own nouriſhment by aſsimilating it to its own Nature; ſo too it is a ſad but ſure Prognoſtick of the ruine and death of a State, when Magiſtrates, who ought to be Remedies of publick Evils, become patterns of Corruption; when the Tribunal, which ought to be a Sanctuary for Innocency, is made a retreat for Villany, and a ſhelter for Oppreſsion; when the Sword of Juſtice, which is deſign'd to heale the Wounds of the Commonwealth, has a keener edge ſet upon it only to make them wider. And therefore God, who well knew the fatal miſchiefs of ſuch a corrupt Miniſtry, when he form'd a Republick among the *Jewes*, and gather'd them into an holy Commonwealth (over which he himſelf did immediately preſide) he appointed ſuch Rulers under him, as were fill'd with a Spirit of Wiſdom and Courage, and inflamed with a Zeale for Juſtice; ſuch as *Moſes* and *Joſhuah*, men that were furniſhed with all the excellent Graces and Qualities that are neceſſary for executing the beſt Laws, or for being eminent Examples of them.

And

And as this may teach Magiſtrates how to behave themſelves in their publick Offices and Employments, ſo it may inſtruct all Corporations and leſſer Societies, by what meaſures they ought to be governed in the choice of their Magiſtrates and Repreſentatives; for though your Votes are your own, yet you ought not to diſpoſe of them meerly as you pleaſe, not as your private piques and averſations, or particular Friendſhips and Intereſts ſhall ſuggeſt unto you; but with a ſerious regard had to the common Good and publick Welfare: for the Obligation that every man ows to the Publick, and the Relation that every private perſon ſtands in to the whole Community, makes it his Duty to promote, as far as in him lies, its ſettlement and ſecurity; and conſequently that he give his Voice for ſuch to be Magiſtrates and Repreſentatives, as he believes to be endued with Wiſdom and Courage, and acted by Principles of Loyalty, Juſtice, and Religion: For as Religion in general is the beſt Reaſon

ſon of State, ſo Juſtice in particular does in a moſt effectual manner contribute to its growth and preſervation; and the univerſal practice of it in the private members, and the impartial diſtribution of it in the publick Miniſters is the ſtrength and ornament, the ſupport and beauty of Government, nay, ſo eſſential is Juſtice to the Eſtabliſhment and Intereſts of Society, that it is but to repeat an old Remarque, to tell you, that Thieves and Robbers think themſelves oblig'd to preſerve it among themſelves. Thoſe wicked Confederacies and Combinations (that are the Peſts of publick Weale) could not ſubſiſt without ſome ſeeming exerciſe of it among themſelves; nor would they be able to carry on their unjuſt Deſigns upon the Publick, except they were faithful to their unlawful Truſts, and juſt in the diviſion of their unjuſt Spoiles and Acquiſitions. So that all Societies in this reſpect have the ſame common means of preſervation, and what Cement is to a Building, that is Juſtice to a State; it binds and knits all the parts

parts together, maintains the intireneſs of the Body, and keeps all its Members in a fixt condition and an eſtabliſhed Peace.

And this is ſufficient to prove, that whereas Sacrifices were commanded with a reſpect to other Duties, Juſtice alwayes was, and is, and ever will be enjoyned for its own ſake. And muſt not Juſtice then, which has its end in it ſelf, be far more grateful and acceptable to God, than Sacrifice, whoſe goodneſs was meerly relative, and depended upon its ſubſerviency to other Duties? And though it be true, that among the *Jewes* Sacrifice was a Duty as well as Juſtice, and though all Duties, that have the Authority of God's will for their practice, are pleaſing to him; yet we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that thoſe Duties are moſt acceptable to God, that are founded upon the ſtrongeſt Reaſons, and that carry their Obligations not in their accidental reſpects and mutable Relations, but in their own natural goodneſs,

neſs, and unalterable Equity; and ſuch is Juſtice and not Sacrifice.

IV. That Juſtice is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifice is evident *from the different effects of theſe two Duties.* Now the effect of Sacrifices was the expiation of legal Guilt; for God who by his Poſitive Will had made Natural Pollutions, accidental Diſeaſes, the touching of a dead Body, &c. criminal and penal; ordain'd that the Guilt contracted by thoſe wayes ſhould be aboliſhed by a Sacrifice, and the Offerer thereby reſtor'd to his legal Innocency and Priviledges: And though the Sacrifice both argued and expiated Guilt, yet had it no efficacy to Atone God's anger for ſins of a deeper Guilt and a profounder Malice; ſuch as were Idolatry, Murder, Adultery, &c. for, for theſe no Sacrifices were appointed. But we find it otherwiſe in the diſtribution of Juſtice. An impartial Execution of that in Magiſtrates and Judges does not only put a ſtop to the growth and increaſe of ſin, which pro-

vokes Gods anger against a Nation, but it also appeaseth the Wrath, and disarms the Severity of God; and prevents the coming down of his dreadful Judgements upon a people for the most hainous sins already committed. A famous instance of this Truth we have among the *Israelites*, whom God had smitten with a most grievous Plague, because they were guilty of two most grievous Sins, *viz.* Whoredome and Idolatry; and the Plague continued to devour till Justice was executed; but as soon as *Phinehes* acted by an extraordinary Spirit, and an extraordinary Zeal, nail'd the Adulterous Couple to the Ground, and made them publick Examples of Justice, because they had been so of sin, God withdrew his hand, and *the Plague was* Psal. 106. 30. *stayed.*

And as this shews that Justice is more acceptable to the Lord than Sacrifices; so it may teach also Princes and Magistrates (if they have any regard to the Publick Weale and Prosperity of the Nation)

on to put on Justice as a Robe, and Righteousness as a Diadem, and to let all Offenders (of what Rank or Quality soever they are, either in respect of their Crimes or Persons) feel the deserved smart of their Rods, and the just severity of their Laws. For as this is the End of their Commission, and the Reason of their Institution; so they shall not only do good to their own Souls by such a faithful discharge of their Duty, but they shall also prove excellent Instruments of Happiness to the whole Kingdom, by delivering it from those Judgements that either are already come, or that are approaching. St. *Austin* tells us, that the mighty Succels, and long Prosperity of the *Romans* was a Reward given them by God for their eminent Justice, Temperance, and other Vertues: and if we examine the Sacred Scriptures, we shall find no such sure Foundations of publick Peace and Prosperity, as the due administration of Justice and Judgement. *Solomon* the wisest of Kings tells us, *That if the wicked be taken from before the* Prov. 25. 5.

King, his Throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed in Righ-
Prov. 29. 4. *teouſneſs*; That *the King by Judgement e-*
29. 2. *ſtabliſheth the Land*; That *all the people re-*
joyce, when the Righteous are in Authority;
28. 2. And *by a man of Underſtanding the State of a Land is prolonged*. And all this is true, not only upon the account of the natural tendency of the thing, but alſo of the Divine Favour and Benediction: it being the ordinary and uſual method of God's Providence, to bleſs and proſper thoſe Nations, that have pious and upright Governours, and to curſe and puniſh thoſe, that have vitious and corrupt Rulers.

What Reaſon have we then to bleſs God, that live under ſo Excellent a Government, and ſo Juſt a Prince, that rather than Juſtice ſhould not be adminiſtred, ſends his Judges to our own homes, that ſo Juſtice (like the Sun, the great Miniſter in Nature) may viſit all places, and influence all parts of the Nation with Light, Heat and Vigour? It was *Darius*'s complaint, that

that his *Empire was like a raw Bull-hide, Tread it down in one place, and it would rise up in another*; But God be praised, this Kingdom is subject to no such inconvenience, because Justice is sent into all parts of the Land at the same time, and Judgement is alike administred in every County, and by the Equality of the Distribution all is kept in an even frame, order and composure.

And now what remains? but as we ought to be thankful for so great a Mercy, so we ought to pray to God to continue it to us, and to beseech him, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and the only Ruler of Princes, that all those, who bear any part in the Rule and Government of these Nations, may have their Hearts warm'd with Zeal for Justice, and be ready upon all Occasions, in despight of all Temptations to the contrary, to use their Power and Authority for the punishment of Evil Doers, and for the praise of them that Do Well.

Which

Which God grant for Christ Jesus sake. *To whom with the Father and Holy Ghost be ascribed all Might, Majesty, Dominion, Praise and Thanksgiving now and for ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

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